

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 7, 2010

Chairman Obey
Committee on Appropriations
Room H-218, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Lewis
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

We write to request supplemental funding of an additional \$85 million over the President's Deepwater Horizon oil spill legislative package. While we strongly support the President's request to provide NOAA with \$5 million for various environmental studies to improve the Federal response to the spill and \$15 million to guarantee compensation to out-of-work fishermen in the event of a declared fisheries disaster, as well as \$2 million for environmental studies by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and U.S. Geological Survey, we believe that additional funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) and FWS response and recovery activities is needed to address the environmental catastrophe that is unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico.

On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon, a floating exploratory drilling rig owned by Transocean Limited and leased to energy giant British Petroleum, exploded in the Gulf of Mexico approximately 42 miles south of Venice, Louisiana. The rig, which burned uncontrolled, subsequently sank on April 22 to rest at a depth of 5,000 feet. A blowout preventer, intended to prevent the release of crude oil from the well-head, failed to activate, thereby allowing the estimated 5,000 barrels, or 210,000 gallons of crude oil to spill daily into the Gulf of Mexico. Recent reports from experts in the analysis of oil slicks have stated that the size of the oil spill has been greatly underestimated.

Working at depths of nearly a mile under the sea surface makes it extremely difficult and technologically challenging to stop the spill. New innovations, including injecting chemical dispersants underwater directly at the well-head, are being used to mitigate the spill at the source; yet unforeseen complications and impacts are likely. Recently, researchers have detected large oil plumes from just beneath the surface of the sea to more than 4,000 feet deep, likely related to this deepwater injection of dispersant. Some of these plumes are 10 miles long and a mile wide. Moreover, at least 25 National Wildlife Refuges and myriad wildlife resources in the Gulf are directly threatened by the oil and toxic effects of dispersants.

It is abundantly clear that an oil spill of this magnitude and its harmful impacts on marine and coastal resources and the ocean environment were never fully contemplated. Therefore, we respectfully request you to make \$85 million in supplemental funding available: \$50 million to NOAA and \$35 million to FWS, which we expect the Administration to pursue full compensation for from the responsible parties, for the following activities:

NOAA Oil Spill Trajectory Modeling: \$10 million - NOAA plays a critical role by providing accurate and timely observations and predictions of the trajectory of the oil spill, including modeling for oil and smoke from burning oil. However, additional resources are needed to address data gaps to better monitor, track, and observe impacts to the marine and coastal environment, and in addition, to aid oceanographic modeling of the Gulf of Mexico. Better models will lead to more effective targeting of assets, more efficient response and recovery effort, and reduced response and recovery costs to the Federal Government, the States and the responsible party.

NOAA Natural Resource Damages Assessments (NRDA): \$35 million - NOAA is also responsible for conducting NRDA to determine environmental costs of the oil spill to trust resources, by collecting pre- and post-impact spill data, including from fisheries, marine mammals and other protected resource surveys, stranding responses, necropsy analyses, habitat assessments and socioeconomic impact studies. The scale and environmental impact of the oil spill on coastal and marine trust resources is unprecedented not only due to the open-ended duration of the spill, the oceanography of the Gulf of Mexico and relative proximity to the Gulf shore, but also due to the timing of the spill, which coincides with spring bird migrations, sea turtle nesting, and the spawning of commercially and recreationally important fish and shellfish populations. The economic and natural resource damage costs of the spill will likely exceed several billion dollars, but can only be calculated and reimbursed through accurate and timely NRDA conducted by NOAA.

NOAA Cooperative Research: \$5 million - NOAA's cooperative research program involves commercial and recreational fishers in the collection of fundamental fisheries information, utilizing the collective experience of fishers and scientists to produce scientifically sound data. This oil spill has had a devastating economic impact on local fishing communities and employing fishers through cooperative research will achieve dual goals of collecting necessary data for NRDA, while keeping fishers on the water, while fisheries are closed.

FWS Environmental Contaminants Program and NRDA: \$25 million - The Environmental Contaminants Program administers NRDA for the FWS and is at the center of the agency's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and other natural resource disasters. The funding requested is needed to support training, readiness, surveys and additional contaminant biologists whose expertise will be crucial in the coming months and natural resource damage assessment.

FWS National Wildlife Refuge Inventory and Monitoring: \$5 million - At least 25 national wildlife refuges are threatened by the oil in the Gulf states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida and another 30 Refuges could be harmed should significant amounts of oil and dispersant enter the Gulf Loop Current. The funding requested is needed for baseline inventory and monitoring of the fish and wildlife resources on each Refuge. With the looming disaster FWS must move quickly to document fragile trust resources so that accurate claims can subsequently be established against BP.


FWS State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program: \$5 million with waiver of state match requirement - In collaboration with FWS, and other agencies and stakeholders in the region, the

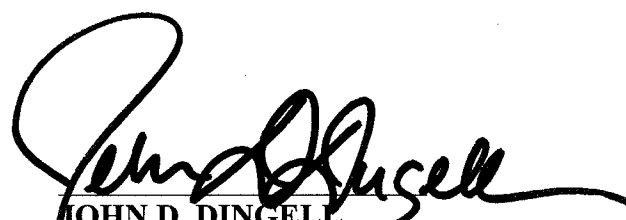
State fish and Wildlife agencies are on the forefront of preparing for short and long-term impacts to fish and wildlife on non-federal lands and waters. The funding requested is needed for the states of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Texan and Florida to document baseline data, conduct research and plan for natural resource damage assessment and restoration of marine and coastal areas and to support restoration of wildlife and habitat within their borders.

It is clear that an oil spill of this volume, scale and duration was never fully contemplated by the industry or Federal and State regulators. Supplemental funding is needed to help us respond to and assess the damages of this catastrophic oil spill, which is and will continue to severely impact the natural resources and communities in the Gulf of Mexico.

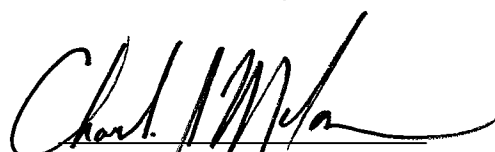
Thank you for considering our request.


Sincerely,

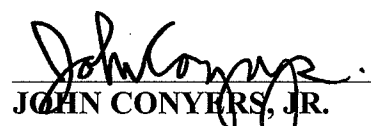

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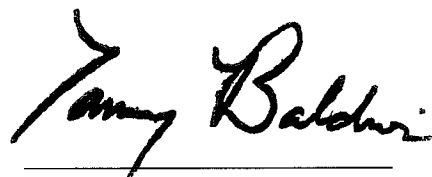

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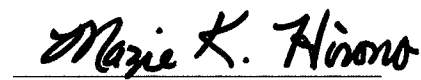

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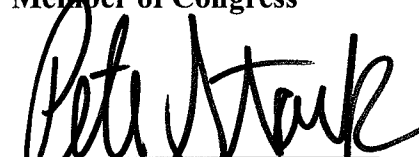

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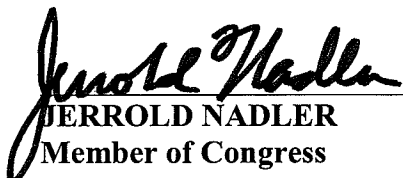

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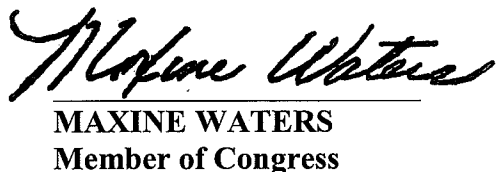

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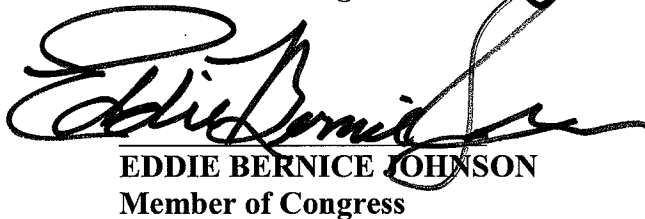

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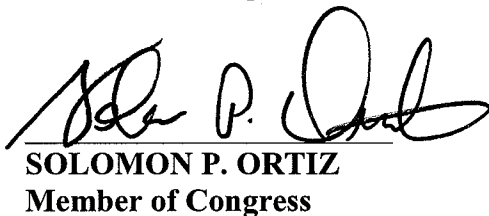

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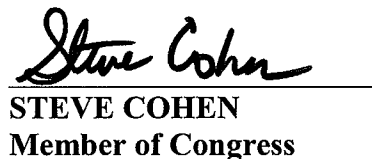

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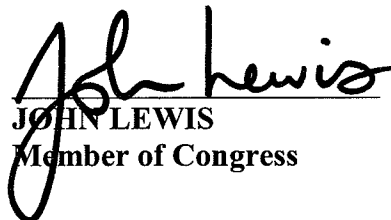

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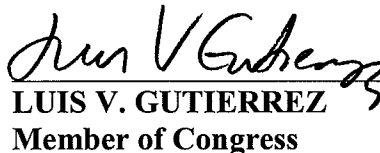

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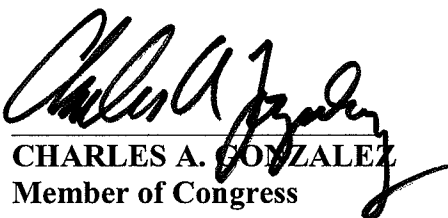

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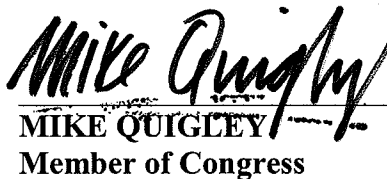

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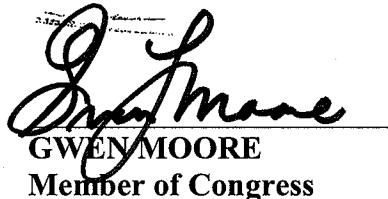

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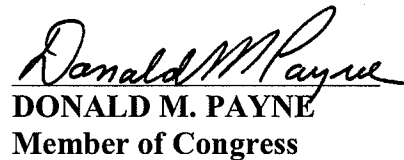

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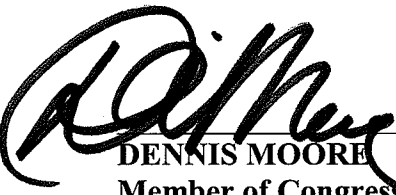

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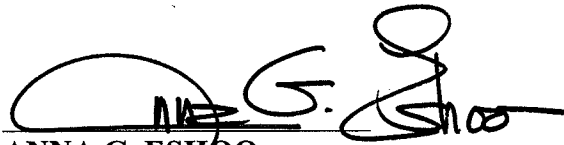

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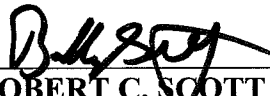

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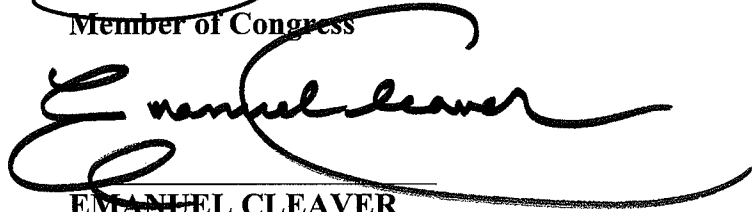

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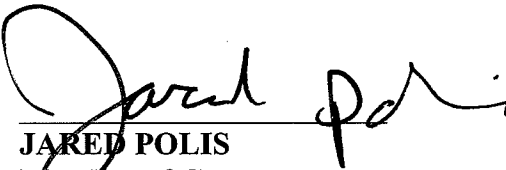

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